



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2021

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES CONCLUSION OF FEDERAL REVIEW PROCESS
FOR CITY PLANS SUPPORTING OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER**

Capital Investment from City of Chicago in South Side Neighborhoods to Follow

CHICAGO, IL — After spearheading a years-long process to gain federal approvals for City initiatives supporting the Obama Presidential Center on Chicago's South Side, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot announced today the review is now complete, passing a major milestone for the Center's future in Chicago. To support this and other economic development, the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Department of Housing, Department of Transportation, Park District and Public Library will move forward with several capital investment projects in the surrounding communities.

"With this final step in the review, Chicago is now officially the home of the presidential center for our country's first Black president," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The Obama Presidential Center and nearby capital improvement projects will undoubtedly distinguish our city's historic South Side as a world-class economic and cultural hub. Through opportunities both created and attracted by these initiatives, residents in the surrounding communities, will have long overdue access to much-needed, sustainable and good-paying jobs and other neighborhood resources."

This announcement follows the National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration determination that the federal actions supportive of the development of the OPC and the roadway improvements being considered would not have a significant impact on the environment. While still awaiting receipt of final documentation, the City of Chicago anticipates beginning necessary pre-construction work, including relocating utility lines, in April. The Barack Obama Foundation is expected to start construction of the OPC in the second half of this year, starting with preliminary roadwork and then physical construction as early as August.

"The Obama Presidential Center is a catalyst for development and investment in the south side neighborhoods around Jackson Park," said Ald. Leslie Hairston, 5th Ward.



“In addition to the public library, activity center and green space, the capital investment will improve traffic and attract additional investment.”

Transportation Improvements

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) has designed a series of transportation improvements that will be coordinated with construction of the OPC and are intended to make Jackson Park and the OPC into a world class destination on par with the City’s Museum Campus on the lakefront. The plan will increase green space, improve connectivity and safety for pedestrians and bike riders, and accommodate future traffic demand.

The plan, approved by the City Council in 2018, will create more than five acres of new green space by converting the following roadway segments to parkland:

- Cornell Drive between North Midway Plaisance and Hayes Drive
- South Midway Plaisance between Stony Island Avenue and Cornell Drive
- Marquette Drive between Stony Island Avenue and Richards Drive
- Northbound Cornell Drive from 68th Street to where Cornell Drive becomes two-way

The following roadway improvements are designed to handle existing and future traffic demand and improve connectivity in and around Jackson Park and the surrounding neighborhoods:

- Adding a southbound, third lane on Lake Shore Drive from 57th Street to Hayes Drive.
- Improving capacity and safety on Hayes Drive between Lake Shore Drive and Cornell Drive.
- Adding a travel lane in each direction on Stony Island from 59th Street to 65th Streets, while maintaining on street parking and loading lanes. Stony Island will benefit from a streetscape beautification that will include planted medians, left turn lanes at key intersections, and pedestrian refuge islands to enhance safety.
- Reconfiguration of the intersection of Stony Island, Midway Plaisance and 59th and 60th Streets to improve capacity and pedestrian and traffic safety.
- New pedestrian underpasses in Jackson Park under Hayes Drive west of Lake Shore Drive and two under the new Hayes Drive and Cornell Drive intersection. Brand new pathways within Jackson Park to provide key connections for people biking or walking through the park, connecting these new and existing underpasses together.
- Modernization or installation of seven traffic signals, providing the opportunity to interconnect and synchronize traffic as well as being compatible with potential Bus TSP technologies.



- Installation of new energy efficient street lights along the new sections of roadway.

In designing these improvements, CDOT went through an extensive public engagement process and studied a number of options before settling on the final plan. The set of traffic mitigations and improvements will ensure that those who travel by car and bus are able to get to where they need to go, even with increased future traffic demands. The traffic study found that with these roadway changes and mitigations looked at as a whole, travel times for drivers in and around the park will remain relatively unchanged.

These roadway improvements, as well as other contemplated in the federal review, are funded through \$174 million in funds programmed by the State of Illinois.

Woodlawn Report and Housing Ordinance

To maximize the Obama Presidential Center’s beneficial impact on Woodlawn area needs, the Departments of Planning and Development (DPD) and Housing (DOH) implemented multiple community-driven resources ahead of its construction to coordinate future private investment.

DPD developed the “Woodlawn Plan Consolidation Report” to formalize nearly two decades of local planning priorities involving housing, commercial development and the public realm. Adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission in May 2020, the report’s 2021 priorities include public engagement efforts to help develop design guidelines for new construction and to establish local priorities for the private redevelopment of City-owned land, especially along 63rd Street.

DOH simultaneously developed the “Woodlawn Housing Preservation Ordinance” to formalize five local priorities. Adopted by City Council in September 2020 in partnership with Ald. Jeanette Taylor and Ald. Leslie Hairston, the priorities are intended to:

- Help protect existing residents from displacement
- Create new rental and for-sale housing opportunities that are affordable to households at a range of incomes
- Ensure that existing housing stock offers good quality housing for residents
- Promote housing options to support equitable and inclusive income diversity in Woodlawn
- Support economic development opportunities

The housing ordinance also provides nearly \$10 million in financial resources to help rehabilitate existing affordable housing; mandates affordability requirements on all rental and for-sale housing developed on City-owned residential land; and



creates a Right of First Refusal Pilot Program that requires owners of buildings with 10 or more units to give tenants an exclusive opportunity to make an offer on the property prior to their sale.

Track & Field and Park District Work

The Chicago Park District will move forward with a new track and field facility at the corner of Stony Island Avenue and 63rd/Hayes. The Park District is constructing a new running track with a multi-use artificial turf field within the track. The track will be a 400 meter eight lane rubber surface track including a long jump pit and high jump area. The artificial turf field will be striped for soccer, football, and lacrosse and allow for evening play with newly installed sports lighting.

The Obama Foundation donated up to \$3.5 million to the Park District to cover the cost of construction of the multi-purpose artificial turf field. The work on the track and field facility will restart this spring with an anticipated open date in Summer 2021.

The Park District will also relocate several existing utilities lines within Jackson Park. The utility relocation work includes the reroute of Park District sewer, water and electrical utilities that are in the future footprint of the OPC site. The work will occur on city and Park District property and city streets. The utility relocation is anticipated to begin in April 2021 and be complete by the Fall.

In 2021, the Park District and City plan to begin implementing some of the mitigation measures developed as part of the Section 106 process including a design process for the Midway. The Park District will also begin the design and community outreach process on several other projects in the South Lakefront Framework Plan including renovating the Iowa Building, relocating the Jackson Bark dog-friendly area and renovating the ball diamonds west of Cornell Drive.

Small Business Improvement Fund

The City's Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) will also begin offering grants up to \$150,000 for workplace improvement projects in portions of greater Woodlawn this month. Applications are open now at www.chicago.gov/sbif and are due by Wednesday, March 3. Additional opportunities for SBIF financing in the area will follow in 2022 and 2023 as a part of the grant program's three-year, \$60 million funding plan.

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